A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services
Issue 5, November 2007

A message from Minister Madeleine Meilleur

Welcome to the latest issue of *Spotlight on Transformation*, the ministry's bulletin dedicated to keeping you informed of news and progress in the developmental services sector.

It is an honour to be continuing as your Minister of Community and Social Services. I am extremely proud to be charged with this important duty, and as I move forward with my responsibilities, please know that I will be guided by the needs and interests of the people we serve.

In the four years since the McGuinty government took office, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and its community partners have worked hard to build a more inclusive province for people with a developmental disability. The effort that has gone into transforming the developmental services sector in Ontario since 2004 has truly been remarkable. So it is with great pride that I acknowledge your achievements and tireless dedication to building a brighter future for people with a developmental disability.

You have all played a major role in laying the foundation for the transformation of supports and services, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to work alongside you again and to continue to make important contributions towards supporting people with a developmental disability and their families across the province.

In the coming year, I look forward to visiting and meeting as many community partners, leaders and organizations as possible in order to achieve the worthy goals of the transformation together.

Madeleine Meilleur
Minister of Community and Social Services

In this issue, we are turning the spotlight on our facility closure initiative.

Ontario's move to community-based supports on track

In September 2004, the government announced plans to transform supports for people with a developmental disability. One of the centre pieces of this plan was to close the three remaining provincially-operated facilities for adults with a developmental disability.

Closing the three facilities is the result of a long-standing commitment by successive Ontario governments to move from an institutional-based service system to a community-based system — one that promotes inclusion, independence and choice. This initiative allows approximately 1,000 residents to live closer to their families and friends and to experience community life.

In the past two years, more than 563 individuals have moved to their new homes from Huronia Regional Centre, Rideau Regional Centre and Southwestern Regional Centre. This is in large part due to the efforts of families and 115 community agencies that have worked hard to welcome these individuals back into Ontario

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Ontario's move to community-based supports on track

communities. Thanks to them, many of these individuals are now living more independently in neighbourhoods across the province. The best part is we continually receive positive feedback from families about their family members' experiences following their move to the community, so we know good things are happening.

The ministry remains on target to move all individuals and close the facilities by March 2009. Over the next six months, approximately 300 people will be moving to the community. This will be an extremely busy time for everyone. Facility staff will be preparing residents for their move to the community. Community partners will continue to put in place support services and prepare the homes for these individuals to move into. We will keep you up-to-date as we continue to prepare to close the facilities.

As we begin the final phase of closure, the ministry is excited about continuing to work together with families and our community partners to welcome residents into their new homes. We also look forward to hearing more about each resident after they move to experience life in a community setting.

Success story

Cindy comes into her own

Here is an excerpt of a note received by a Regional Placement Facilitator from a family whose daughter moved to the community in 2007.

We have been thinking about you lately and even though you are not still involved with Cindy, I'm sure you will delight in knowing what a person she has become. We marvel every day when we hear of places she's been, things she has accomplished and just to see her general personality changes.

She has learned to be very trusting with other people, especially her massage therapist and the girls who give her pedicures and manicures. We were down two weeks ago and her worker was telling me that she just loves to have someone fuss with her hair. So while she was curled up on the loveseat, trying to nap, I kept brushing my fingers through her hair and she had the biggest grin on her face before she dozed off to sleep. This is something new because when she first moved in the girls could barely brush her hair. She did not like anyone touching her head.

Our greatest joy was watching her walk between two of the girls to the bathroom and back. They are really working on her mobility to get her walking again.

All of this is exciting to us but when we hear she's been to Port Dover, the movies and just recently to Niagara Falls to the zoo, it is a dream come true. The agency called me on Friday to see if we were ready to have her come home (imagine that) for a visit. They are looking at the last week of September. Of course we are and we have the animal farm at one of our beautiful parks and we can walk along the river. Just gives us goose bumps to think about it.

Families speak

"I had many reservations about him being placed ... I can't believe the change that I have observed in a short period of time since his move!"

[a sibling's comment about his brother]

Ontario's road home:
Studying residential placements

As part of the ministry's long-standing commitment to move from institutional care to community-based care, a study will be undertaken to assess facility residents' transitions into the community.

The study will be led by a team of independent academics starting in the fall of 2007. The process will involve interviews with individuals who have moved from the facilities and their families so we can hear first-hand about their experiences with the move to community-based care.

The study will give us important information about the outcomes of deinstitutionalization in Ontario, but more importantly, it will give us a better understanding of what deinstitutionalization means for our residents and their families.

The study will:

- describe what happened to the individuals when they moved to the community
- determine the extent individuals were able to access services identified in their support plans
- assess the impact of the placement on family and friends, and
- examine factors related to changes in well-being.

The findings of the study will help inform the ministry's future policies in the developmental services sector and give us important information that will improve supports in the sector.

progress: by the numbers

As of October 31, 2007, 563 residents have moved into the community.

Huronia Regional Centre	210
Rideau Regional Centre	188
Southwestern Regional Centre	165

There are only 392 residents remaining in the three facilities.

Huronia Regional Centre	110
Rideau Regional Centre	204
Southwestern Regional Centre	78

Families speak

"My age and the distance between us (at the facility) was making it difficult to travel and see her as often as I would have liked. My visits were getting less every year. I can only say thank you. Without your help, I would have lost contact with my child."

[a mother's comment after her child moved closer to her home]

You asked us

Question: What will happen with the buildings and land where the facilities are located? I have an idea for one of the locations.

Answer: All government-owned lands and buildings, including those at the three facilities, fall under the responsibility of the Ontario Realty Corporation.

Once a property has been "declared surplus", the Ontario Realty Corporation sets up a process that leads to the reuse, sale or redevelopment of the property. Depending on interest and viability, this process can take some time.

The Ontario Realty Corporation declared the properties at the three facilities surplus in the fall of 2006.

The Ontario Realty Corporation, through its real estate planning process, works with private and public sector leaders to plan for the future use of the lands, buildings and infrastructure.

Many ideas surface during the planning for reuse or sale of properties such as the facilities. The Ontario Realty Corporation considers all ideas in formulating recommendations to the government on plans for the best use of the properties. At this time, the government has made no decisions about the future of these properties.

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